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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0555
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9345
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 3949
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1430
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 3125
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6446
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 4055
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 0552
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0540
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2487
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0159
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000094

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STATE FOR EAP/MLS; PACOM FOR FPA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [PREL](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: NO REWARD FOR OPPOSING FORCED LABOR IN BURMA

REF: RANGOON 1174

Classified By: Poloff Dean Tidwell for Reasons 1.4 (b, d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Labor advocate and pro-democracy activist Su Su Nway, jailed since October for her successful efforts to sue GOB officials on forced labor charges, recently spent time in a prison hospital for deteriorating health. Her lawyers have appealed her conviction and expect an initial ruling in early February. In a separate event, authorities in Irrawaddy Division detained and beat a man to death, whom they had accused of failing to provide involuntary labor for a government road project. END SUMMARY.

SU SU NWAY: HEALTH AND LEGAL ISSUES

12. (C) Family members report that Su Su Nway, imprisoned for 18 months in October 2005 after she successfully sued local officials last year for using forced labor (reftel), recently spent nine days in the Insein Prison clinic. Prison authorities informed the family at the time of a routine prison visit on January 6 that she had entered the prison infirmary on January 4 after a fainting spell.

13. (C) According to the family, prison authorities would not allow Su Su Nway to take her regular prescription medicine for cardiac insufficiency. After the medicines provided by the prison authorities failed to work, her health gradually deteriorated. Diarrhea and dehydration further compounded her low blood pressure. She eventually responded to treatment and the prison doctor discharged her back to her ward on January 12.

14. (C) After the Rangoon Division Court rejected her appeal in November to overturn the original conviction, one of her attorneys filed another appeal to the High Court in December. On January 13, the High Court notified Su Su Nway's lawyers that the court would hold a hearing on February 1 to decide whether to consider the appeal.

MEANWHILE, THE FORCED LABOR BEAT GOES ON

15. (C) According to an Embassy source, on December 30 local Peace and Development Council authorities in Myothit village near Pathein, Irrawaddy Division arrested Ko Than Htaik and severely beat him for failing to provide voluntary labor on a government road construction project. Authorities had also accused him of failing to donate funds to train the village militia. After his release, his family admitted him to the hospital on December 31 where he died the same day. Yaykyay police reportedly arrested the local officials involved in the beating.

16. (C) COMMENT: We doubt Su Su Nway's appeal will overturn her conviction. After the fatal beating of their loved one, the family of Ko Than Htaik would likely be too afraid to file charges against the local authorities responsible for his death. Forced labor will likely remain a fact of life (and death) in Burma until there is commitment at the highest levels of the regime to stop it. END COMMENT.
VILLAROSA